

Director of Music 2023 Report, SAPPS Music Society AGM 2024

2023 was another fabulous year, with a commissioned work so 'on point' and relevant to young people AND society at large. The other songs 'wrapped around' this song cycle to feature local and new composers, along with emotive and fun arrangements of some well-known hits of the past.

New opportunities for students were once again created by the PSMF team. Daring to be different, to sound different, to look different so that we create lifelong memories for our young students, the teachers and families involved. We are so grateful for the commitment of our team and the many volunteers that make this unique festival so special.

Onstage we were nearly full every night – 13 rows of students, accompanied by the two rotating orchestras and troupes, well prepared hosts, along with Advance Australia Fair Auslan Signing choirs, 10 young DJs who 'launch pad' the I am the Earth REMIX backing track, and 4 talented guest artists.

Students are at the centre of all that we plan and create – and they 'lap it up'!!! Engagement in The Arts for so many young lives. 10 brilliant concerts with great ticket sales from families and friends.

Vital to the success of our concert series, our thanks also go to Rohan Yates, Steph Marcus, Andrew Johnston, Jo Casson and the Festival Theatre sound and lighting team.

Well done and thanks to the following people for providing so many South Australia students the opportunity to participate in and experience quality music....





- To Irene – manager extraordinaire, who has our back the whole way and leads with action
- Cathy – our hard-working choral educator who goes above and beyond, always with a smile and good humour
- Felicity and Caroline – fabulous accompanying and support for all you work with
- Choir teachers and accompanists + school support staff and other volunteers from schools – your work is so valuable and appreciated – you are giving students such a gift!
- Michael M + Michael A and the conducting team Susan and Lisa, with newbies Kate and Sonia – a great year's work
- Maria and her team – Charlotte and Kathleen, Toby and Chad – makes the music sparkle!
- Heather and her mentors – once again such professional and confident hosts
- Anne and her concert managers - the Space to hold the choirs all worked out so smoothly,
- Chad for his IT support and Stars on Stage vision + generous supporter of everything we do
- Guest Artists who wowed and entertained the audience AND the choir and orchestra

★★★To everyone, BRAVO★★★

Repertoire 2023.

- ✳ *Proud Mary* – host welcome over slow piano intro, along with 2 soloists starting with verse 1 and 2, then high energy orchestra and troupe helping the choir open the show with this Tina Turner hit – made extra relevant and memorable in the year of her passing.
- ✳ *Advance Australia Fair* – Choir adding 2 lines of Auslan signing to each verse, and joined onstage by a GUEST ARTIST Auslan Signing group who signed (not sang) the whole anthem.
- ✳ *South Australian Seas* – composed by Uni student, Anne Mathews, this sea shanty tells of the port towns around the SA coastline... choir joined by wharf band from the orchestra.. tin whistle, bodhran, fiddle etc.. out from the pit and onto stage – unique experience.
- ✳ *Whisper!* piano only with choir – such fun as they 'secretly' whisper softly and sneakily...
- ✳ *Charleston* – celebrating the 100-year anniversary of this dance number – with choreography for the choir and a solo singing verse 1.

Commissioned Work – World of Tomorrow – composed by Paul Jarman, artistic direction by Jo Casson.

-  *Away From the Screen* – there's a whole world out there, put the screen down
-  *Keep the Truth Alive* – what is fake, real – don't go down the rabbit hole – find the truth
-  *Follow My Own Dream* - I know who I am, be true, follow YOUR dream
-  *This is Our World* – Imagine the world – hope, freedom, fair, love.... That we shape and dream

- ★ *Nothing Else Matters* – adding a choral element to a well-known heavy metal number proved to be a VERY popular mix, and the choir and orchestra played and sang with spirit and dynamics.
- ★ *I am the Earth REMIX* - plus electronic backing – we ventured where we have not been before and allowed the student DJ to make the music we sang to, by using a pre-loaded Launch pad, standing at the DJ desk centre stage. Featured a narrator, a soloist, and an Auslan signer to interpret the narrator's text.
- ★ *Smile* – an up-tempo, happy piece that the students sang with gusto, featuring a soloist.
- ★ *Keep on Movin'* - boy band Five's hit from the 90s was a winner – featuring soloist, the troupe and choir to end the show along with a giant mirror ball which sparked up the auditorium.

Resources – Recording groups were selected from the talented SAPPS Choir + Highgate PS and Coromandel Valley PS Choirs. Thanks to Cathy and Gaby, and Lisa and Stacey. The SAPPS Choir learned all 4 CW songs + 4 others, and the schools did 2 each. We appreciate the extra effort, learning and teaching time that goes into creating this set of resources for the following year. And thanks to Glyn L – sound engineer extraordinaire and fab friend of the PSMF. And to Jonny G – app builder. The App and FoM website are extremely well utilised, easily accessed and kept up to date.

Conference One – Two Brilliant days – Paul Jarman flew over and introduced his 4 new songs – teaching us the parts, the story behind the songs and instilling enthusiasm and positivity into our choral learning. He also led a session on his favourite choral games and warmups he uses with choirs.

Country Conferences – held at Whyalla, Naracoorte, and Monash. Always great to get out into the regions and see these choir teachers and offer them their own teaching / learning day.

Combined Choir Rehearsals – Started in week 3 with longer sessions and only two per day, and being based at one location, with schools travelling to the host school. This seemed to work quite well, the hour and a half rehearsal gave time for related warmups and introduction of more repertoire in the time. Did prove difficult for some larger schools to get to a host venue due to student adult ratios and cost of buses.

Car Park Sing – we decided we would try this again, approx. 15 turned out and once again the same people who normally turn up... we had lovely weather and enjoyed a sing through of the repertoire.

Conference 2 – Term 2, end of week 2, Friday. We encouraged teachers to bring along their own music stand to 'free the hands' and enable some conducting practice as each song is being revised. Cathy did an amazing jog running the day when illness prevented Robyn from being there.

Choir Assessments – back to 'real assessments' - visiting all schools and assessing our choirs to provide structured feedback according to the Choir Rubric. The A-Team this year included Stacey, Cheryl, Georgie, Ira, Lisa, and Kendall.

Soloists – Auditions in Term 2 week 6, after pre-audition solo workshops, followed by Term 3 masterclasses across two different weeks – students select which one to attend. Billy St James helped out at very late notice and was fantastic, along with Annie Kwok at Klemzig, then Mark Oates joined Annie at Darlington a week later. So fortunate to have these experts work with our students.

Orchestra and Troupe

Orchestras started Sunday end of week 5 and rehearsals began in week 6. Term 2 full day rehearsal Thursday week 2, end week 7.

Troupe started in term 2, week 4 and soloists chosen week 5 at Underdale and Norwood. Jo, Laura, and Addi T choreographed and costumed the kids in yellow (Proud Mary), fluoro (Keep on Movin') and the CW was stunning once again with 'Alice in Wonderland characters', business attire and bright coloured shirts. An on-stage camera held by a troupe member provided 'live to screen' footage of faces and movement.

A Conducting Masterclass was held at Klemzig, term 3, Friday week 3, for choir teachers and regional conductors to rehearse, refine, conduct the 2023 repertoire. We had 12 teachers attend, from experienced to quite new, but all eager to learn and practice.

Offsite rehearsals scheduled a week earlier – Week 4/5 – each orchestra having a longer FIRST rehearsal, then two rehearsals a day. Set up larger stage for orchestra, hosts, soloists, choreo leaders. Worked very well.

Festival Concert Series – ‘CONCERT DAY’ consisting of photos, rehearsal, dinner, concert, parents pick up. Optional to purchase Vilis or BYO evening meal. Students new ‘hold’ is the Space Theatre which was SO easy to get to and very suitable for the 450 students along with separate rooms for solo warmups.

Regional PSMF – Country choir visits for Adelaide Affiliates + remote schools along with regional workshops in weeks 9-11. Kingscote, Southeast, Whyalla and Port Pirie and East of Ranges. Offered a regional workshop to the Murray Mallee for their local schools – held at Murray Bridge North – well attended and will continue to offer their region this support. Riverland still self-sufficient and run their own combined school rehearsals. Port Augusta and Eyre Peninsula did not have a regional concert. The Northern Metro ran a 3-concert series once again at the Shedley Theatre, Southern Metro picked up again to 2 concerts at The Hopgood Theatre.

The SAPPS Choir welcomed Stephanie Eaton to the team. The choir had an amazing year of very memorable gigs – from the Australia Tourism Adelaide Oval Roof Climb, to the 50th Birthday Gala concert for the Adelaide Festival Centre, to their very own 20-year anniversary which brought many past SAPPS Choir members back to sing and celebrate.

Congratulations to Cathy, Steph, Cheryl, Jo and Chad. This team are a solid working unit who provide an engaging extension choral program with unique and memorable performance opportunities to committed students.

****An OUTSTANDING year****

Year 3-4 Class Singing – repertoire and ideas are still available on the website. Need to continue adding to this resource as teachers ARE accessing and using them.

Collaborations –

- ✦ DreamBIG Children’s Festival – once again the biennial ‘The Mighty Choir of Small Voices’, support and in-school choir visits in Term 1, week 8 to approx. 16 participating schools, with song My Island Home.
- ✦ Opening Event May 17 at the Festival Theatre, joined onstage by Dusty Feet Mob for choreography to chorus.
- ✦ MC Jack from BTN contacted from this event and worked with hosts.
- ✦ Uncle Moogy – shield making and vision for welcome to country, PSMF Shield made.
- ✦ Eisteddfod Choral competition – sponsorship by PSMF, award presentation.
- ✦ Adelaide University – offering university students sessions with our choir teachers in schools.
- ✦ Western Australia Massed Choir Festival associate affiliate.
- ✦ UNESCO – inclusion of logo in Songbook and website.
- ✦ Supported by teachers Lorraine and Sandra from the Klemzig Centre for Deaf Education in the teaching of Advance Australia Fair Auslan Signing – this continues, and they are very positive about us including their language in our festival.
- ✦ Electronic music Jules and partner Erin to start the DJ project for I am the Earth REMIX.
- ✦ Attending MERSA meetings, Catholic Music Festival, fringe concerts, Heather Buchannan’s open rehearsals.

Professional Development, events, community concerts and conferences –

DreamBIG Children’s Festival planning and meetings for Opening Event, Combined Arts Workshop, ADYO and Young Adelaide Voices concerts, SA Curriculum Conversation Workshop for Primary Educators, various online classes.

Thank you and congratulations on another fabulous year of engaging students in artistic excellence through choral music. ♥

The PSMF continues to provide a program and performance opportunity where students learn and thrive..... ★

Robyn Filmer, February 2024.